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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8002**

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**State of Washington**

**58th Legislature**

**2003 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Energy & Water (originally sponsored by Senators Morton, Hewitt, Sheahan, Stevens, Parlette, Mulliken, Oke and Roach)

READ FIRST TIME 01/30/03.

1 TO THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,  
2 AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF  
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
4 UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE HONORABLE ANN M.  
5 VENEMAN, SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND TO DALE  
6 BOSWORTH, CHIEF OF THE FOREST SERVICE, AND TO THE HONORABLE GAIL A.  
7 NORTON, SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR:

8 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of  
9 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully  
10 represent and petition as follows:

11 WHEREAS, Wildfires in forest areas are increasing at an alarming  
12 rate with the 2002 fire season one of the most severe since the 1940s;  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, There are over 180 million acres of public land near  
15 communities with a high risk of fire; and

16 WHEREAS, Forest health both in Washington state and throughout the  
17 nation has been on a steady decline in many forests over the last  
18 thirty years; and

19 WHEREAS, Forest insect infestations, disease, overly dense forests,  
20 weeds, and brush and shrub build-up are increasing problems; and

1           WHEREAS, Federal government agencies can help eliminate the  
2 impending crisis by working closely with the state and local  
3 communities to restore damaged landscapes and appropriately reforest  
4 and manage lands near homes and urban areas;

5           NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that there be  
6 aggressive, immediate, and continued forest health-related management  
7 activities, including thinning overstocked stands, on all forestland  
8 and on all Washington national forests. Aggressive forest management  
9 will enhance and protect the health of federal, state, and private  
10 forestlands. Such efforts will reduce the effects of catastrophic  
11 wildfire that threaten all forest values, including wildlife, water  
12 quality, and recreation opportunities. Aggressive management will  
13 protect communities within and surrounding the forests.

14           BE IT RESOLVED, That the United States Forest Service review the  
15 effectiveness of current fire fighting procedures and fire fighting  
16 procedures used in the past, including fire breaks established before  
17 fires and fire lines established during fires, to ensure that the most  
18 effective methods are used; and

19           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we strongly support federal management  
20 activities to reduce the risk of further spreading of insects and  
21 disease to state forestlands and private lands adjacent to federal  
22 lands; and

23           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we encourage the United States Forest  
24 Service to first focus management activities on federal lands that  
25 threaten adjacent private lands to decrease the risk of wildfire that  
26 could spread on to privately owned timberland, and then request from  
27 Congress the authority to use revenue generated from harvest activities  
28 to fund ecosystem restoration and reforestation activities to benefit  
29 fish and wildlife and improve water quality; and

30           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we encourage the United States Forest  
31 Service to strongly consider current market conditions and the economic  
32 viability of timber sales when choosing harvest methods, encourage  
33 innovative and efficient logging techniques that ensure adequate  
34 protection for fish, wildlife, and water quality, and capture as much  
35 economic value from timber as possible without compromising water  
36 quality or wildlife habitat; and

37           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That federal, state, and local agencies  
38 work together with the public to streamline the processes to jointly

1 address all forest health issues in order to stem the tide of forest  
2 and grazing land wildfire, insect infestations, disease, and  
3 environmental degradation; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That federal and state agencies work with  
5 all stakeholders to reduce the amount of litigation and appeals  
6 directed at all federal agencies that delay or encumber forest service  
7 efforts to provide policy solutions and to conduct field operations  
8 either directly or indirectly so that our nation's public forests'  
9 health issues can be addressed; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That Congress provide adequate funding  
11 levels for the United States Forest Service and continually assess the  
12 progress towards a healthy forest environment;

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately  
14 transmitted to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United  
15 States, the Honorable Ann M. Veneman, Secretary of the Department of  
16 Agriculture, Dale Bosworth, Chief of the Forest Service, and the  
17 Honorable Gail A. Norton, Secretary of the Department of the Interior,  
18 the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of  
19 Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of  
20 Washington.

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